



LANDSCAPE WALLS & RETAINING WALLS

City Code Sections: [78-570](#), [78-1279](#), [78-1405](#), [78-1606](#), [78-1684](#), [86-66](#)

Planning & Zoning Department 952-249-4620
www.ci.orono.mn.us

Permits:

A **Residential Accessory Structure Building Permit** is required for any wall which is:

- 4 feet or more in height, measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, even if it replaces an existing wall. *All walls with a height that exceeds 4 feet will require engineered plans.*
- A tiered wall which exceeds 4 feet in total height. Tiered walls are considered as one wall unless they are separated by a horizontal distance twice the height of the lower wall. Separation will be measured from the back of the lower wall to the face of the upper wall.

A **General Zoning Permit** is required for walls which:

- Exceed two feet in height above existing grade; or
- Require more than 20 cubic yards of imported fill; or
- Are located less than 5 feet from the property line.

No Permit Required. Retaining walls not requiring a permit are those walls which:

- Do not exceed two feet in height above existing grade; and
- Are located within the property and at least five feet from any property line; and
- Is not associated with more than 20 cubic yards of imported fill.

Hardcover:

- Retaining walls are considered a hardcover exclusion, however are not permitted within 75 feet of lakes, tributaries, and creeks.
- Retaining walls in Commercial zones may have additional location, permit, and plan requirements.

Location: Retaining walls, planters, and similar structures may be located in all required yards when all of the following conditions are met:

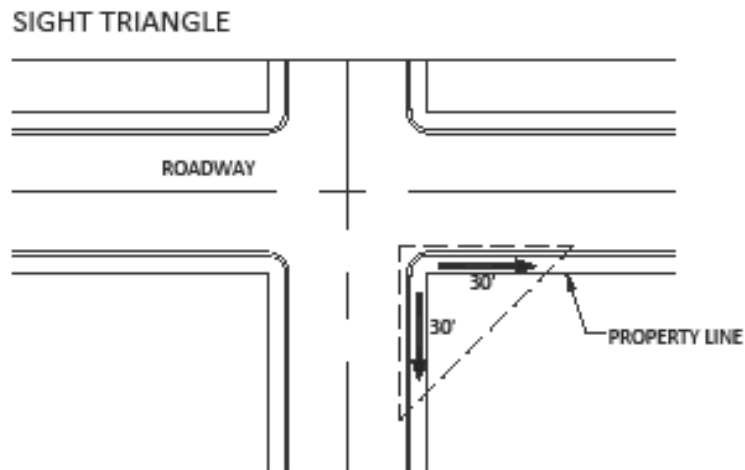
1. The structure is located at least 10 feet from the edge of the traveled roadway; and
2. The structure is not located within a drainage, utility or other easement, except upon approval in writing for an encroachment agreement from the City; or similar approval from another regulatory and/or utility agency; and
3. The structure creates no impacts to drainage direction, rate or volume for adjacent properties; and
4. The structure is two feet in height or less above existing grade.
5. Structures exceeding the allowed height of a fence shall be located so as to meet the required accessory structure setbacks established for that yard.

Last Updated: January 2021

Note: This is an information sheet only, every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the information contained herein; however, if any information is not consistent with provisions of the City Code, the Code provisions will prevail.

Prohibited Locations. Walls **may not** be located:

- Within the shore setback zone, which is typically 75 feet of the OHWL of a lake or a creek without a variance per City Council approval.
- Within the average lakeshore setback, walls which exceed 42 inches in height from the existing grade – [Section 78-1279](#);
- Within a wetland or wetland buffer without a wetland permit and a/or conditional use permit.
- Within a public right-of-way or easement without a right-of-way permit and/or an encroachment agreement.
- Within a sight triangle without the approval of the City Engineer. The sight triangle is depicted on the right, and is defined as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the projected curb lines (or edge of pavement if no curb) of two intersecting streets; thence 30 feet along one curb line; thence diagonally to a point 30 feet from the point of beginning on the other curb line; thence to the point of beginning. (See image below).



Submission Requirements for Permits ([citizenserve portal link](#))

- Plan review fee (building permit only)
- Permit escrow & escrow agreement (amount varies based on project)
- A **site plan or survey** showing the location of the proposed wall(s) with existing and proposed contours extending at least 50 feet in all directions beyond the limits of the wall construction. Top and bottom elevations must be provided for each proposed wall, as well as earthwork calculations if applicable.
- Plans for the retaining wall prepared and signed by a professional engineer (P.E.).
- Hardcover calculations for properties in Tier 1 through Tier 5 within the [Stormwater Quality Overlay District](#). Generally this is within 1,000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of certain creeks.

Contact Information

Inspection Department 952.249.4600

Planning and Zoning Department 952.249.4620 or planning@ci.orono.mn.us

City Engineer 952.249.4600

Last Updated: January 2021

Note: This is an information sheet only, every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the information contained herein; however, if any information is not consistent with provisions of the City Code, the Code provisions will prevail.